

# U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Benefits Administration



## SURVEY OF VETERANS and SERVICEMEMBERS SATISFACTION with the VA EDUCATION BENEFITS CLAIMS PROCESS

Thank you for your help with this important project. This booklet contains questions about your recent experience with filing for VA education benefits. Please base your answers only on your experience with the education claim identified in the space below.

Please read and answer the following question first.

**According to their records, VA received an education claim from you, you are currently receiving education benefits, or have received them in the past. Is this true?**

- ☐ **Yes** (Continue to instructions on the next page of the booklet, complete the rest of the questionnaire as soon as possible, and mail it in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.)
- ☐ **No** (STOP. You do not have to complete the rest of this questionnaire, but please return the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.)

Again, we thank you for helping VA provide better service to veterans and their dependents.



## INSTRUCTIONS

This survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. Please follow these instructions.

- ① Use a soft lead pencil.
- ② Fill in only one answer circle for each question unless it tells you to *"Mark all that apply."*
- ③ When you are finished, please place the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and put it in the mail.

All questions ask you to fill in a circle. For example:

46. Did VA let you know your application had been received?

- ☒ Yes  
☐ No

In addition, at the end of the form there is space for you to give us any additional comments concerning how VA could improve the way education benefits are handled.

Please watch for "SKIP" instructions -- they tell you when to skip over a group of questions that you do not need to answer.

### OMB Control Number: 2900-0569 Public Reporting Burden Statement

VA may not conduct, sponsor, or require the respondent to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB Control Number. All responses for this collection are voluntary. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 20 minutes per response, including the time necessary for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Failure to furnish the requested information will have no adverse effect on any VA benefit to which you may be entitled.

The information you supply will be confidential and protected by the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 U.S.C. 522a) and the VA's confidentiality statute (38 U.S.C. 5701) as implemented by 38 CFR 1.526(a) and 38 CFR 1.576(b). Disclosure of information involves releases of statistical data and other non-identifying data for the improvement of services within the VA benefits processing system and associated administrative purposes. If you have comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspects of this collection of information, call 1-800-827-1000 for mailing information on where to send your comments.

## PREPARING FOR YOUR EDUCATION BENEFITS

**1. Are you currently on active-duty in the U.S. Armed Forces?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**2. When did you first LEARN about VA's education benefits program?**

- ☐ Before recruitment
- ☐ At the time I was recruited
- ☐ Soon after I joined
- ☐ Six months or more after I joined
- ☐ Shortly before separation
- ☐ At separation
- ☐ After separation

**3. Where did you first LEARN about VA's education benefits program?**

- ☐ Commercial or advertisement
- ☐ Recruiter
- ☐ Information pamphlet
- ☐ Another person in my unit
- ☐ Military base or unit Education Office
- ☐ Friend or family
- ☐ VA's website on the Internet
- ☐ Other

**4. Looking back, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from this source?**

- ☐ All
- ☐ Most
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Little
- ☐ None

**GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN**

**5. How accurate was the information you received?**

- ☐ Very accurate
- ☐ Somewhat accurate
- ☐ Neither accurate nor inaccurate
- ☐ Somewhat inaccurate
- ☐ Very inaccurate

**6. When did you begin to PLAN the use of your education benefits?**

- ☐ Before joining
- ☐ Six months or more before separation from active-duty service
- ☐ Less than six months before separation from active-duty service
- ☐ At separation from active-duty service
- ☐ Less than six months after separation from active-duty service
- ☐ Six months or more after separation from active-duty service

**7. While on active-duty, did you attend any briefings or sessions which provided information regarding your education benefits?**

- ☐ No **(SKIP to Q 10, page 2)**
- ☐ Yes **(CONTINUE with Q 8)**



**8. Looking back, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from these sessions?**

- ☐ All
- ☐ Most
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Little
- ☐ None

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**Base your answers only on your experience with the claim identified on the cover.**

**NOTE:** For this questionnaire, **active-duty service** also includes active-duty for training for reserve or guard.

**9. How accurate was the information you received?**

- ☐ Very accurate
- ☐ Somewhat accurate
- ☐ Neither accurate nor inaccurate
- ☐ Somewhat inaccurate
- ☐ Very inaccurate

**10. Have you ever received a pamphlet regarding your education benefits through the mail?**

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 12)
- ☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 11)



**11. How much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from the pamphlet?**

- ☐ All
- ☐ Most
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Little
- ☐ None

**CONTACT WITH YOUR SCHOOL'S VETERANS REPRESENTATIVE**

**12. Did you ever contact your school's veterans representative regarding your education benefits?**

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 17, page 3)
- ☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 13)

**GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN**

**13. Why did you contact the school's veterans representative?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Get information before I applied for benefits
- ☐ Apply for education benefits
- ☐ Check on the status of my education application
- ☐ Change the status of enrollment
- ☐ Get enrollment certified
- ☐ Could not get information from VA
- ☐ Get other information

**14. Overall, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from the contacts with the school's veterans representative?**

- ☐ All
- ☐ Most
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Little
- ☐ None

**15. How responsive was the school's veterans representative to your request?**

- ☐ Very responsive
- ☐ Somewhat responsive
- ☐ Neither responsive nor non-responsive
- ☐ Somewhat non-responsive
- ☐ Very non-responsive

**16. How courteous were they?**

- ☐ Very courteous
- ☐ Somewhat courteous
- ☐ Neither courteous nor discourteous
- ☐ Somewhat discourteous
- ☐ Very discourteous

**GO TO NEXT PAGE**

**CONTACTING VA  
BY TELEPHONE**

**17. Did you ever phone VA about your education benefits?**

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 28, page 4)  
☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 18)



**18. What number did you use MOST OFTEN when phoning VA about your education benefits?**

**Mark only one**

- ☐ Toll-free 1-800-827-1000  
☐ Toll-free 1-888-GI BILL-1  
☐ Long-distance area code and phone number at my own expense

**19. Why did you call VA?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Get information before I applied for benefits  
☐ Apply for education benefits  
☐ Check on the status of my education claim  
☐ Change the status of enrollment  
☐ Certify attendance  
☐ Check on my remaining education benefits  
☐ Check on payment  
☐ Correct a payment problem  
☐ Ask about the Work Study Program  
☐ Get other information

**20. How easy was it to get through to VA when you called?**

- ☐ Very easy  
☐ Somewhat easy  
☐ Neither easy nor difficult  
☐ Somewhat difficult  
☐ Very difficult  
☐ Never got through (SKIP to Q 28 page 4)

**GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN**

**21. Which of the following typically happened to you when you called VA?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Frequently busy  
☐ Wait over a minute for call to be answered  
☐ Disconnected before my call is answered  
☐ Call gets misdirected  
☐ Other  
☐ None of the above

**22. In general, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from your telephone contact with VA?**

- ☐ All  
☐ Most  
☐ Some  
☐ Little  
☐ None

**23. Were you generally able to get this information on the first call?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**24. Was your question answered by the automated system or did you speak with a VA employee?**

- ☐ Automated system (SKIP to Q 28, page 4)  
☐ VA employee (CONTINUE with Q 25)  
☐ Both (CONTINUE with Q 25)



**25. How responsive was the person you talked to at VA?**

- ☐ Very responsive  
☐ Somewhat responsive  
☐ Neither responsive nor non-responsive  
☐ Somewhat non-responsive  
☐ Very non-responsive

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26. How courteous was the person you talked to?

- ☐ Very courteous
- ☐ Somewhat courteous
- ☐ Neither courteous nor discourteous
- ☐ Somewhat discourteous
- ☐ Very discourteous

27. Were VA employees able to give you information about your particular education claim on the phone?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Didn't need claim information

### VISITING VA'S WEBSITE AND CONTACTING VA BY INTERNET OR E-MAIL

28. Have you ever VISITED VA's Internet website (www.gibill.va.gov) to get information?

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 33)
- ☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 29)

29. Why did you visit the VA Internet website (www.gibill.va.gov)?

Mark all that apply

- ☐ Get information before I applied for benefits
- ☐ Apply for education benefits
- ☐ Certify attendance
- ☐ Send an inquiry to VA
- ☐ Get other information about VA education programs
- ☐ Couldn't get through on a toll-free phone number
- ☐ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN

30. In general, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from your visit to VA's Internet website?

- ☐ All
- ☐ Most
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Little
- ☐ None

31. Did you find anything difficult or confusing about the website?

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 33)
- ☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 32)



32. What specifically did you find difficult or confusing about the website?

Mark all that apply

- ☐ Information displayed was hard to read
- ☐ Information displayed was hard to understand
- ☐ Do not understand where to go to retrieve the information I want
- ☐ Website did not have the information I was looking for
- ☐ It was hard to move about within the website
- ☐ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

33. Have you ever used the Internet or e-mail to CONTACT VA about your education benefits?

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 39, page 5)
- ☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 34, page 5)

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**34. Why did you contact VA using the Internet or e-mail?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Get information before I applied for benefits
- ☐ Apply for education benefits
- ☐ Check on the status of my education claim
- ☐ Report a change in the status of my enrollment
- ☐ Certify attendance
- ☐ Check on my remaining education benefits
- ☐ Check on payment
- ☐ Correct a payment problem
- ☐ Ask about the Work Study Program
- ☐ Couldn't get through on a toll-free number
- ☐ Sent an e-mail to get information after visiting the VA website
- ☐ Other inquiry, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**35. In general, how much of what you NEEDED TO KNOW did you get from your contact with VA using the Internet or e-mail?**

- ☐ All
- ☐ Most
- ☐ Some
- ☐ Little
- ☐ None

**36. What response did you get to your Internet or e-mail inquiry?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Received an acknowledgment of my inquiry
- ☐ Received a complete answer to my inquiry
- ☐ Received an answer, but not all the information requested
- ☐ Never received an answer from VA (**SKIP to Q 38**)
- ☐ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**GO TO TOP OF NEXT COLUMN**

**37. How long did it take to receive an answer to your Internet or e-mail inquiry?**

- |                              |                                       |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 day  | <input type="radio"/> 6 days          |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 days | <input type="radio"/> 7 days          |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 days | <input type="radio"/> 8 days          |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 days | <input type="radio"/> 9 days          |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 days | <input type="radio"/> 10 days or more |

**38. How long do you think is REASONABLE for VA to answer your Internet or e-mail inquiry?**

- |                              |                                       |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 day  | <input type="radio"/> 6 days          |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 days | <input type="radio"/> 7 days          |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 days | <input type="radio"/> 8 days          |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 days | <input type="radio"/> 9 days          |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 days | <input type="radio"/> 10 days or more |

### OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

**39. Did you ever receive information about your education benefits from any of the following?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ VA regional office, either in person or through correspondence
- ☐ State or county Veterans Service Organizations
- ☐ VA representative on base
- ☐ Reserve unit
- ☐ Friends, family, co-workers
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

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## APPLYING FOR BENEFITS

40. Do you recall filling out the application for your education benefits?

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 43)  
☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 41)



41. Did you find anything to be difficult or confusing about the application form?

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 43)  
☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 42)



42. What specifically did you find to be difficult or confusing about the application form?

Mark all that apply

- ☐ Print was hard to read  
☐ It was too long  
☐ Some questions were not clear  
☐ Some instructions were confusing  
☐ Asked for information VA should have already had  
☐ Asked for information that was hard to supply  
☐ Not clear why all the information was needed

43. To whom did you submit your application for education benefits?

- ☐ School  
☐ VA directly  
☐ Don't know

44. At the time you applied, how completely did you understand the steps necessary to process your claim?

- ☐ Completely  
☐ Mostly  
☐ Somewhat  
☐ Only a little  
☐ Not at all

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45. At the time you applied, how completely did you understand how benefits would be paid to you?

- ☐ Completely  
☐ Mostly  
☐ Somewhat  
☐ Only a little  
☐ Not at all

46. Did VA let you know your application had been received?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

47. How completely did VA keep you informed of the status of your application?

- ☐ Completely  
☐ Mostly  
☐ Somewhat  
☐ Only a little  
☐ Not at all  
☐ Didn't need status information

48. How long did it take to process your application?

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 week  | <input type="radio"/> 6 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 7 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 8 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 9 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 10 weeks or more |

49. How long do you think is REASONABLE for VA to process your application?

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 week  | <input type="radio"/> 6 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 7 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 8 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 9 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 10 weeks or more |

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**50. From the time your application was submitted to VA, how long did it take to get your first check?**

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 week  | <input type="radio"/> 8 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 9 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 10 weeks         |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 11 weeks         |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 12 weeks         |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 13 weeks or more |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 weeks |  |

**51. How long do you think is REASONABLE for you to receive your first check from the time your application was submitted to VA?**

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 1 week  | <input type="radio"/> 8 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 2 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 9 weeks          |
| <input type="radio"/> 3 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 10 weeks         |
| <input type="radio"/> 4 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 11 weeks         |
| <input type="radio"/> 5 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 12 weeks         |
| <input type="radio"/> 6 weeks | <input type="radio"/> 13 weeks or more |
| <input type="radio"/> 7 weeks |  |

## CERTIFICATION AND PAYMENTS

**52. Do you find anything to be difficult about the monthly CERTIFICATION process?**

- ☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 53)  
☐ No (SKIP to Q 57, page 8)  
☐ Don't know (SKIP to Q 57, page 8)  
☐ Don't need to certify attendance (Reserve/Guard) (SKIP to Q 57, page 8)

**53. What specifically do you find to be difficult about the monthly certification process?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Certification forms are not received
- ☐ Certification forms do not arrive at the same time each month
- ☐ Have had to contact VA to get forms sent
- ☐ Forms are confusing
- ☐ Forms represent burdensome paperwork
- ☐ Information on form is inaccurate

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**54. What specifically do you find to be difficult about sending your monthly certification form to VA through the MAIL?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Do not certify by mail
- ☐ Have not experienced any difficulty
- ☐ Have to pay postage
- ☐ Forms sent to VA have been lost in the mail
- ☐ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**55. What specifically do you find to be difficult about the monthly TELEPHONE certification process when you dial 1-877-823-2378?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Do not certify by telephone
- ☐ Have not experienced any difficulty
- ☐ Telephone number is frequently busy
- ☐ System did not have my VA record
- ☐ Call was disconnected before certification completed
- ☐ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**56. What specifically do you find to be difficult about the monthly INTERNET certification process (www.gibill.va.gov)?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Do not certify by Internet
- ☐ Have not experienced any difficulty
- ☐ Unable to log-on to certification website
- ☐ Information on VA Internet website form is confusing
- ☐ Information on VA Internet website form is inaccurate
- ☐ System did not have my record
- ☐ Not sure if Internet certification was completed successfully
- ☐ Other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

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**57. Do you find anything to be difficult about the monthly PAYMENT process?**

- ☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 58)  
☐ No (SKIP to Q 59)  
☐ Don't know (SKIP to Q 59)

**58. What specifically do you find to be difficult about the monthly payment process?**

**Mark all that apply**

- ☐ Payments do not arrive when needed  
☐ Payments do not arrive at the same time each month  
☐ Have had to contact VA to get payment  
☐ No explanation of the amount  
☐ No access to direct deposit  
☐ Problem with direct deposit

**59. Have you ever received an inaccurate payment?**

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 61)  
☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 60)

**60. Was the inaccuracy resolved in a timely manner?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**61. Have you ever had to borrow or pay out-of-pocket expenses in order to enroll or stay in school because VA did not complete your paperwork on time?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**62. Have you ever had to delay enrollment because VA did not complete your paperwork on time?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

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## OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

**63. Do you believe you have a good understanding of the education benefits you have used and which remain?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

**64. Do you plan to use all of your benefits for this education program?**

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No  
☐ Not sure

**65. All things considered, how satisfied are you with the way VA has handled your education benefits claim?**

- ☐ Very satisfied  
☐ Somewhat satisfied  
☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
☐ Somewhat dissatisfied  
☐ Very dissatisfied

**66. Overall, how would you rate your knowledge of VA benefits for which you might be entitled?**

- ☐ Excellent  
☐ Very good  
☐ Good  
☐ Fair  
☐ Poor

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

**67. What is your gender?**

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

**68. What is your current age?**

- ☐ 19 years old or younger
- ☐ 20 to 24 years old
- ☐ 25 to 29 years old
- ☐ 30 to 34 years old
- ☐ 35 to 39 years old
- ☐ 40 years old or older

**69. What is your current marital status?**

- ☐ Never been married
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated
- ☐ Divorced
- ☐ Widowed

**70. Aside from the classes you are currently taking, what is the highest level of education you have completed?**

- ☐ Less than high school graduate
- ☐ High school graduate or GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ College graduate
- ☐ Graduate work

**71. In what type of education program are you currently enrolled?**

- ☐ High school or GED
- ☐ On-the-job training or apprenticeship program
- ☐ Certificate/license program
- ☐ Two-year academic college program
- ☐ Four-year academic college program
- ☐ Post-graduate degree program

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**72. Do you have any dependent children 5 years old or younger?**

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 74)
- ☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 73)



**73. How many dependent children 5 years old or younger do you have?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4 or more

**74. Do you have any dependent children between the ages of 6 and 17?**

- ☐ No (SKIP to Q 76, page 10)
- ☐ Yes (CONTINUE with Q 75)



**75. How many dependent children between the ages of 6 and 17 do you have?**

- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4 or more

**76. Do you have access to the Internet?**

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

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***Base your answers only on your experience with the claim identified on the cover.*** page 10

**77. Do you have any additional comments concerning how VA could improve the way education benefits are handled?** *(To maintain confidentiality, please do not include your name, address, claim number, or any other identifying information.)*

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your answers are very important.

Please place the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope and send it to:

VA Study Director  
Schulman, Ronca, & Bucuvalas, Inc.  
8403 Colesville Road  
Suite 820  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA



[SERIAL]